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POLICY ISSUES

Periodicity and duration of Governing Council sessions

Report of the Executive Director

Addendum

1. At the request of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP, the Executive Director wishes to clarify her proposal for the establishment of a permanent subsidiary organ of the Governing Council called the "Preparatory Committee". The integrated proposed programme of work for 1996-1997 and the refocusing of UNEP, which has won widespread support in many forums, including, in particular, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, has necessitated a review of the way in which the Council could deal with matters pertaining to the programme and the budget. The Executive Director is of the opinion that, at sessions of the Governing Council, the integrated programme can best be reviewed in a single committee since trying to divide the elements between two distinct committees might prove very difficult, if not impossible. She therefore proposes to replace the present two sessional committees, on programme matters and administrative and budgetary matters, respectively, by one committee which would deal with all matters pertaining to programme and budget at the same time. Such an arrangement would enable the committee to take into account all aspects of the integrated programme and discuss fruitfully the implications both in terms of programme focus and priorities and in terms of their funding.

2. The Executive Director further proposes that this Preparatory Committee be established as provided for in paragraph 1 of rule 62 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council and that it should elect its own Bureau based on the principle of equitable geographical representation as stipulated in rule 18 of the rules of procedure. This will permit member States to negotiate the substantive details of policy, programme and financial issues in the Preparatory Committee and to present their recommendations to the ministerial-level Council for political decision.

3. It is further proposed that the duration of Council sessions be reduced to three days thus encouraging attendance at the highest level of Government required to take the important decisions expected from the Council over the

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next several years, in accordance with the mandates given to it by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. By making this proposal the Executive Director hopes to facilitate attendance at the level required to reassert the important role of the Governing Council in follow-up to that Conference, as well as in relation to the Commission on Sustainable Development, and to enable the Council to carry out its mandate in full recognition of the importance attached to it by Governments.